GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

National Archives and Records Service
Washington, D.C. 20408

IN REPLY REFER TO:

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Kennedy Casket

On February 16, 1966, Mr. John M. Steadman (DOD) and Col. William A. Knowlton (Army) met with Dr. Robert H. Bahmer, Archivist of the United States, Mr. Herman Kahn, Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries, and Walter Robertson, Jr., Administrative Officer, to make arrangements for the disposal of the Kennedy casket in NARS custody.

This was the casket used to transport the body of President John F. Kennedy from Dallas, Texas, to Washington, D. C., and which had become Government property in the custody of the National Archives.

The casket was reddish-brown in color with a brushed satin polish and plain in appearance. The single lid was curved both at the sides and the ends, and was closed with two bolt clamps. Long fluted handles about an inch and one-half in diameter ran along both sides, with one of the handles slightly damaged by being bent at one end. The casket was contained in a bluish-gray painted pine box.

It was agreed that, based on technical advice to be received from DOD, NARS would make the object secure; and it would be turned over to DOD for "disposal" by dropping in the ocean.

On February 17, Commander Carlisle A. H. Trost visited the National Archives and instructed Messrs. Robertson and Lewis M. Robeson, Chief of the Archives Handling Branch, on the procedures to be followed in making the object secure for dropping and sinking. Mr. Robeson followed these instructions as set forth in his report.

At 6:55 a.m., February 18, Col. Knowlton, Sgt. Stilwell, and Messrs. Robertson and Robeson rolled (on dollies) the object from the security area of the National Archives Building to an Air Force truck. The truck, with Col. Knowlton as a passenger, left the National Archives Building about 7:05 a.m.

Walter Robertson, Jr.

Walter Robertson, Jr.
Administrative Officer, NARS

February 24, 1966
Date

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